

Members

Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chairperson
Rep. Paul Robertson
Rep. Robert Cherry
Rep. Dan Leonard
Sen. Ryan Mishler
Sen. Greg Walker
Sen. James Lewis
Sen. Richard Young



NATURAL RESOURCES STUDY COMMITTEE

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Authority: IC 2-5-5-1

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 15, 2009
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: Ft. Harrison State Park, Garrison House
Meeting City: Lawrence, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chairperson; Rep. Robert Cherry; Rep. Dan Leonard; Sen. Ryan Mishler; Sen. Greg Walker; Sen. James Lewis; Sen. Richard Young.

Members Absent: Rep. Paul Robertson.

Representative Bischoff (Chairperson) called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. After an introduction of the Natural Resources Study Committee's members and staff, the Chairperson explained that the Committee must finish its work before the end of the interim, which concludes on October 31, 2009. The Chairperson then called upon the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide an update concerning natural resources issues.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Update by DNR

Chris Smith, Director, Legislative Relations, DNR

Mr. Smith indicated that in many of DNR's recreation related areas revenues are up when compared to 2008, including the following:

- Camping revenues are up 15%
- Off-road vehicle registrations are up 9%
- License sales are up, with an additional 33,000 sales

Reasons for the increase include much better weather than in 2008 and, due to the recession, many people are looking for activities closer to home.

DNR is also conducting activities to encourage more individuals to use the state parks and state recreation areas. An example is the Hoosier Outdoor Experience on September 26-27 at Ft. Harrison State Park. The program is free and includes horse riding, mountain biking, fishing, and several other activities. In addition to the weekend activities, one thousand third graders will be visiting the park during the week.

Topics for Interim

The Chairperson asked if there were any issues that needed to be examined by the Committee during the interim. After receiving suggestions from DNR, Committee members, and others in attendance, the following topics were discussed and approved by the Chairperson for further discussion:

- Protection of back country areas in Yellowwood State Forest and Morgan-Monroe State Forest
- Gate fees at Brookville Lake
- Warnings at lowhead dams
- High hazard dam inspections and maintenance
- Plan to reduce vehicle/deer accidents
- Update on TB in cattle and deer outbreaks in southern Indiana
- Hunting licenses for disabled veterans
- Paddle fish rule change
- Fee to offset the cost of processing deer for area food banks
- Update on trout fishing issue on the Whitewater River near Brookville
- Update on Hanna Creek remediation proposals
- Carbon monoxide poisoning from boating incidents

Hanna Creek Remediation

Bill Beglin, Brookville Lake Sailing Association

Mr. Beglin distributed handouts to Committee members (Exhibit #1) and made the following points in his presentation:

- The Hanna Creek area is popular because it is close to Brookville Lake's northern no wake/fishing zone and it is a large facility with 192 parking spaces, 76 slips, and four launch ramp lanes.
- The Brookville Lake area has over 560,000 visits per year, which brings in over

\$12 million in spending within 30 miles of the lake.

- Silting in the area will cause the infrastructure (e.g. marina, ramps) at the facility to be become unusable unless some remedial action is taken.
- A 2006 DNR study looked at various solutions to the silting problem.
- Funding is needed for an engineering study to develop a remediation solution.

In response to a question from the Committee regarding adding a fee, Mr. Beglin stated that there was already a \$20 fee to purchase a pass to access Indiana public lakes.

John Davis, Deputy Director, DNR

Mr. Davis stated that there is an annual pass that can be used on all lakes in the state. Money from the pass goes to properties throughout the state. In a past budget there was money to allow some dredging but the money was not released by the state Budget Committee. Many people become concerned when they hear the term "dredging". Silt cannot be piled on the shoreline without a way to contain it because it is unstable and will flow back into the stream. The Hanna Creek watershed would also need buffer strips and other management projects to address the issues facing Hanna Creek.

Committee members made the following points during discussion:

- The current Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) fee divides the money equally among law enforcement, watershed enhancement, and river and lake maintenance. The money goes to local governments, not to state properties - Committee members were not sure if this is a legal or policy restriction. The current revenues from the fees do not cover all the requests received.
- The fee for annual passes could be raised with the extra money going to a dedicated maintenance fund.
- The use of silt traps and upstream enhancement lowers the rate of siltation.
- From past experience land owners may take some of the dredged material but are unwilling to buy it because of the transportation cost involved.

John Davis indicated that he would report at a future meeting where LARE money has been spent in the past and where it may legally be used.

The Chairperson asked that at a future meeting the Invasive Species Council provide the Committee with an update concerning the Council's planned activities.

The Committee selected the Falls of the Ohio State Park as the site of their next meeting on October 5-6.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.